

Palm Bay Killer, 82, Dies On Death Row

Cruse Convicted Of Killing 6 People In 1987

POSTED: 2:16 pm EST November 30, 2009

UPDATED: 6:12 am EST December 1, 2009

PALM BAY, Fla. -- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement confirmed Monday that convicted killer William Cruse died of natural causes at age 82 on death row Sunday.

Cruse, who was convicted of shooting and killing six people, including two police officers, in 1987 was the oldest death row inmate in Florida. The April shooting rampage also injured 14 other people.

Authorities said Cruse, armed with a high-powered rifle, went into a Winn-Dixie and a Publix parking lot on Palm Bay Road and began shooting. He also took hostages inside the Winn-Dixie, authorities said.

Cruse was a Palm Bay resident and a librarian who claimed that two kids in his neighborhood were harassing and teasing him.

Among the six people Cruse killed were Palm Bay police officers Ronald Grogan and Gerald Johnson.

He was sentenced to death a year or two after the incident.

The mother of Ronald Grogan, Pat Grogan, told WESH 2's Dan Billow, "I am very happy that this day has come about. I was afraid we would die before Cruse did."

Copyright 2009 by WESH.COM. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.